

Do You Really Expect Me To Believe In Three Gods?

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Do you really expect me to believe in three gods? Of course not! New Covenant Faith is Jewish! One of the great misconceptions about the faith of New Covenant believers is that “they believe in three gods.” Of course, this is untrue from the clear teachings in the New Covenant: “And Jesus answered him and said “The first of all the commandments is: Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”” (Mark 12:29; see also 1 Corinthians 8:4; James 2:19). Such statements are typical of the Jewishness of the New Covenant

Scriptures. However, because of the ignorance of scriptural teaching on the “tri-unity” of God, there is confusion on the subject.

The Testimony of the Jewish Scriptures: As we look into Jewish Scriptures we see the mystery nature of God presented: “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). As one Jewish man commented to me, “God is mentioned three times right there in Deuteronomy 6:4, the verse that speaks of His oneness!” “But,” one might object, “It says ‘one’ in the verse.”

True, but the word “one” (echad, in Hebrew), can point to an oneness-in-plurality. For example, when God established the marriage relationship, the Scripture states: “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Here we see that “one” is used when clearly there is not one in the absolute singular sense, but as a oneness-in-plurality. Another text of scripture illustrates this special kind of unity: “And they came to the brook of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with one cluster of grapes” (Numbers 13:23).

Here again one is used to refer to a cluster, which is a unity of plurality. There is another word for one in Hebrew, yachid. Yachid is used in Genesis 22:2, when God is speaking to Abraham about Isaac: “Take now your son, your only son.” Though Abraham had another son, Ishmael, God refers to Isaac as a one-of-a-kind son, the son of the covenant. This word is used for an utterly singular one, and never used for God in the Bible! This nature of God is assumed in the Scripture, rather than explained. That’s why a portion like the following one in Genesis can only make sense in light of this assumption: “The Lord (Who was on the earth speaking with Abraham) rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven” (Genesis 19:24).

In the creation account in Genesis 1:26 where God created man, we are brought into the counsels of God’s own heart: “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Please notice the plural possessive pronoun, ‘our.’ By using

this word 'our', God reveals His own plural nature. The Scripture goes on to say, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him . . ." (Genesis 1:27). It was God's very own image, not a group of images. Therefore, God's nature itself is the reason for the use of the word 'our'.

Isaiah the Prophet assumes God's oneness-in-plurality in several places. Isaiah 6:8 quotes God as He chooses him to be a prophet of Israel: "Who will go for Us, whom shall We send?" Once more in God's own counsel, God refers to Himself with a plural pronoun. Isaiah again assumes this unity within plurality of God's Nature in regards to our redemption: "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time it was, there am I; now the Lord God and His Spirit has sent Me" (Isaiah 48:16). Who is the one "from the beginning" and the one who is always "there?" Only God alone (Isaiah 48:3,5). Thus it is the Lord Himself in that verse, who is sent by The Lord God and His Spirit!

Many more portions of the Jewish Scriptures present the same truth: There is only One God. Yet this one God is revealed in three persons: Father (Isaiah 63:16; 64:8), Son (Isaiah 9:5[6]; Proverbs 30:4) and the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 48:16; 63:10, or the Spirit of God, Isaiah 63:14).

How the Scriptures Teach the Mystery Nature of God: In light of the many polytheistic religions surrounding Israel at that time, the Tanakh (Older Covenant) emphasized the oneness of God, while remaining faithful to the subtle teaching of His plurality. The New Covenant now progressively reveals more of this triune nature (as in Matthew 28:19, "immersing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."), while still being faithful to the truth that there is only one God. So, the New Covenant reveals the truth of God's triune nature, not to imply that there is more than one God, but to be faithful to the revelation of God's nature as seen in the Tanakh. The Tri-unity is not a contradiction of the oneness of God, but the best explanation of His oneness. Consider:

- ◆ The Tri-unity of God best explains the Tanakh's grammatical use of plural nouns and pronouns in identifying God (Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 6:8, Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- ◆ The Tri-unity best explains the various manifested appearances of God, (e.g. Genesis 19:24)
- ◆ The Tri-unity best explains the use of echad for 'one' instead of other words for God, (e.g. Genesis 2:24)
- ◆ The Tri-unity best explains the enigmatic and seemingly paradoxical divine nature of God (Isaiah 48:16). The Tri-unity best explains later theological developments in Jewish mysticism, known as Kabbalah. Consider the following: "Hear, O Israel, YHVH Elohenu YHVH is one.' These three are one. How can the three Names be one? Only through the perception of Faith: in the vision of the Holy Spirit, in the beholding of the hidden eyes alone. The mystery of the audible voice is similar to this, for though it is one yet it consists of three elements-fire, air, and water, which have, however, become one in the mystery of the voice. Even so it is with the mystery of the threefold Divine manifestations designated by YHVH Elohenu YHVH -three modes which yet form one unity" (Zohar (Raya Mehemna) Shemoth 43b,

Brooklyn, NY: Soncino Press, 1984, taken from the CD-ROM Judaic Classics Library II, 2001).

"Here is the secret of two names combined which are completed by a third and become one again. 'And God said Let us make Man.' It is written, 'The secret of the Lord is to them that fear him' (Psalm 25:14). That most reverend Elder opened an exposition of this verse by saying 'Simeon Simeon, who is it that said: "Let us make man?" Who is this Elohim?' With these words the most reverend Elder vanished before anyone saw him . . . Truly now is the time to expound this mystery, because certainly there is here a mystery which hitherto it was not permitted to divulge, but now we perceive that permission is given.' He then proceeded: 'We must picture a king who wanted several buildings to be erected, and who had an architect in his service who did nothing save with his consent. The king is the supernal wisdom above, the Central Column being the king below: Elohim is the architect above . . . and Elohim is also the architect below, being as such the Divine Presence (Shekinah) of the lower world'" (Zohar Bereshith 22a, vol. 1, p. 91, Brooklyn, NY: Soncino Press, 1984).

" . . . the words 'The Lord our God the Lord' (YHVH Elohenu YHVH) represent three grades corresponding to this deep mystery of Bereshith bara Elohim [Genesis 1:1a] . . . This name is here found in three applications, and thence the same name branches out to various sides" (Zohar Bereshith 15b, vol. 1, p. 64-65).

- ◆ The Tri-unity best explains our own "triune nature" and response to God as alluded to in Deuteronomy 6:5, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Since we were created in His image (Genesis 1:27), we therefore display our own kind of tri-unity: spirit, soul and body ("heart . . . soul . . . might").
- ◆ The Tri-unity best explains the unity of God's one truth of God's mystery nature in both Old and New Covenants (Zechariah 14:9, Matthew 28:19). The Tri-unity therefore, best explains the mystery nature and special unity of God.

God's Truth is difficult for the natural mind to comprehend

A famous New Covenant scholar, Augustine of Hippo, was walking along a beach trying to understand the Tri-unity of God. As he struggled in thought, he saw a young boy digging a hole in the seashore and then run back to the water over and over taking water from the ocean and putting it in the hole. Augustine asked him, "child what are you doing?" The boy responded "I'm trying to put the whole ocean in this hole!" Augustine laughed and said to himself, "that's what I was trying to do, too!" These are certainly truths hard to understand in our natural minds. Though Scripture alone reveals the true nature of God, God acknowledges that these truths are not easy to comprehend: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, for as the heaven is higher than the earth, so my thoughts are higher than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8,9).

We are to trust the testimony of Scripture as the true revelation of God regarding both His

nature, and His manner of reconciling sinful people to Himself: by forgiving their sins through His atonement in Messiah Yeshua. Trust Him for who He is and for what He has done for you in Yeshua. Then you will have eternal life as the gift of God!